

# **George Henry Wyatt (1828-1883): Agent, Shipowner, Entrepreneur, and One-Man Naval Department**

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*This is a first attempt to trace the life of George Henry Wyatt. He has previously been known only for his work procuring and administering the civilian steamers provided by Canada for arming and operation by the Royal Navy on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence frontier during the Fenian crisis of 1866-1871. The research presented here shows that by the 1860s he had become a significant member of the Toronto business community. Among several enterprises, he was particularly active as a ship owner and agent for steamship and railway lines. This experience accounted for his selection by the government to organize the flotilla of steamers for the Royal Navy, and his success in that role. He was, however, not able to overcome the effects in Canada of the international economic downturn of the 1870s. He died in a new venture, to promote immigration to the newly opening Canadian west.*

*Cet article est une première tentative de retracer la vie de George Henry Wyatt. Par le passé, il n'était connu que pour son travail d'acquisition et d'administration des bateaux à vapeur civils fournis par le Canada pour appuyer les efforts d'armement et d'exploitation de la Marine royale sur la frontière des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent pendant la crise des Fénians de 1866-1871. Les recherches présentées ici indiquent que, dans les années 1860, Wyatt était devenu un membre important du milieu des affaires de Toronto. Entre autres entreprises, il était particulièrement actif en tant que propriétaire de navires et agent de compagnies de navigation et de chemin de fer. En raison de son expérience, le gouvernement l'a choisi pour organiser la flottille de bateaux*